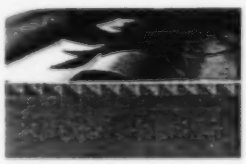
A - Z Index
News Releases
Indian & Inuit Art
Northern Affairs Program
Employment
Education
Kids' Stop
Treaties
Status - F A Q
Programs
Services
PSAB
Sustainable Development



News Release Communiqué

2-2851

MINISTER PRENTICE ANNOUNCES COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICIAL FOR MOHAWKS OF THE BAY OF QUINTE CLAIM

GATINEAU, QUEBEC (March 22, 2007) - The Honourable Jim Prentice, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, today announced the appointment of Douglas Forbes as Community Liaison Official on the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte's Culbertson Tract Specific Claim. Mr. Forbes will support the federal negotiating team by facilitating information sharing with the public about the ongoing negotiation process on this specific claim.

"Canada's New Government is committed to working with the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte at the negotiating table to resolve this claim," said Minister Prentice. "We will continue to engage the municipal and provincial governments and other key third-party stakeholders as these negotiations proceed. The work of Mr. Forbes will be a key part of these overall efforts to share information and ensure that our negotiation process considers local issues and concerns."

Minister Prentice also thanked his Caucus colleague, Member of Parliament Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward-Hastings) for his constructive involvement in this issue: "Daryl is a strong leader who has helped to maintain calm and good relationships in the community. I thank him very much for his hard work."

The First Nation's claim alleges that approximately 827 acres of land, referred to as the Culbertson Tract, were improperly alienated from the First Nation in 1837. The Government of Canada accepted the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte's claim under its Specific Claims Policy in November 2003. On January 9, 2007, Minister Prentice appointed Sean Kennedy as Chief Federal Negotiator to advance the work to resolve the claim.

The Government of Canada is committed to honouring its lawful obligations to First Nations by resolving outstanding grievances to the benefit of all Canadians. Private property is not expropriated to settle claims. If land changes hands as a result of a land claim, it will only take place on a willing-buyer/willing-seller basis. Negotiated settlements bring economic benefits to First Nations and local communities.

For more information, please contact:

Minister's Office
Deirdra McCracken
Press Secretary
Office of the Honourable Jim Prentice
(819) 997-0002

Media Relations
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
(819) 953-1160

Biographical Note - Douglas Forbes

Fact Sheet - Negotiations on the Culbertson Tract Specific Claim

Back to News Release Index

Revised: 2007-03-26
Created: 2007-03-23

Top of Page

Important Notices

A - Z Index
News Releases
Indian & Inuit Art
Northern Affairs Program
Employment
Education
Kids' Stop
Treaties
Status - F A Q
Programs
Services
PSAB
Sustainable Development

Biographical Note

Douglas Forbes

Douglas Forbes is a private contractor, operating a consulting business dealing with Aboriginal issues. Mr. Forbes has had a long and varied career with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, having served as a public servant for more than 30 years. Mr. Forbes held positions as a Superintendent of Education, Policy Analyst and District Director for the department's southern Ontario operations centre in Brantford. From 1997 until his retirement from the federal public service in 2004, Mr. Forbes was the Associate Regional Director General for Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

Mr. Forbes has extensive experience working with First Nation communities throughout Ontario, interacting with the public on Aboriginal and land claim issues and working with the Specific Claims Branch of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. He is also currently serving as a Community Liaison Official for the department on the Caldwell First Nation's specific claim in southwestern Ontario.

Mr. Forbes lives in Toronto, Ontario, and is married with three children.

Back to News Release

Back to News Release Index

Revised: 2007-03-26
Created: 2007-03-23

Top of Page

Important Notices

A - Z Index
News Releases
Indian & Inuit Art
Northern Affairs Program
Employment
Education
Kids' Stop
Treaties
Status - FAQ
Programs
Services
PSAB
Sustainable Development

Fact Sheet

Negotiations on the Culbertson Tract Specific Claim

The Government of Canada is working with the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte to resolve the Culbertson Tract Specific Claim through negotiations. This claim relates to a land transaction that took place about one hundred and seventy years ago.

Looking Back: A Historical Overview

In 1793, the British Crown formally granted a tract of land along the Bay of Quinte to the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte for their use and benefit through the Simcoe Deed. One of the Simcoe Deed's provisions specified that these lands could only be surrendered to the Crown with the formal consent of the Mohawk people through a community vote.

In 1837, John Culbertson, the grandson and an heir of Captain John Deseronto (a former Mohawk Chief), received Letters Patent from the Crown for approximately 827 acres of this land. Over time, parts of this land (known as the Culbertson Tract) were sold to various third parties. The Culbertson Tract is located in and around the present-day Town of Deseronto and the Township of Tyendinaga in southeastern Ontario. The Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte's claim alleges that the Crown's 1837 patent was an invalid transaction since the Mohawk people did not surrender the lands to the Crown before the land was patented to John Culbertson.

Toward a Negotiated Resolution

The Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte submitted their Culbertson Tract Specific Claim to the Government of Canada in 1995. Canada completed a thorough historical and legal review of the claim submission. Following this review, Canada accepted the First Nation's claim for negotiations under its Specific Claims Policy in November 2003.

The Government of Canada represents the interests of all Canadians in negotiating settlements of specific claims with First Nations. As is the case with negotiations taking place across the country, an experienced federal negotiation team is in place to conclude a negotiated settlement with the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte. This team is lead by Sean Kennedy, who was appointed as Chief Federal Negotiator in January of 2007, to advance the work to resolve the claim. The federal team is supported by a Community Liaison Official, Mr. Doug Forbes, who will facilitate information sharing with the public about the ongoing negotiation process. As part of his work, Mr. Forbes will also be available to meet with interested third parties and groups to inform them about the process, answer questions and hear their concerns.

The Government of Canada is committed to working with the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte to conclude a fair and final settlement of this claim that meets the needs and interests of both parties. As these negotiations proceed, the Government of Canada will continue to engage the municipal and provincial governments and other key third-party stakeholders.

The Benefits of Settling Claims

The Government of Canada believes that the best way to resolve outstanding claims is outside of the court process, through negotiations with First Nations. It is in the best interests of all Canadians, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike, to find mutually-acceptable ways to resolve such claims. Negotiations lead to "win-win" situations that balance the rights of all Canadians.

Private property is not expropriated to settle land claims and access to private property is protected. If land changes hands as a result of a land claim, it will only take place on a willing-buyer/willing-seller basis.

Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians benefit from the fair resolution of specific claims. While addressing injustices that have undermined trust and understanding, settlements also bring hope and new economic opportunities to First Nation communities. First Nations who receive settlements often, in turn, invest their settlement dollars in neighbouring communities through economic development initiatives. Settling claims not only brings economic benefits to First Nations and local communities, but also provides certainty for First Nations, government and industry as well as non-Aboriginal Canadians. Negotiated settlements are about justice, respect and reconciliation. They are not only about coming to terms with the past, but also about building a better future for all Canadians.

Quick Facts About Specific Claims

- Specific claims relate to Canada's outstanding obligations under historic treaties and agreements or the way it handled First Nation funds or other assets like land under the *Indian Act*.
- Canada established its Specific Claims Policy in 1973, along with a process and funding for resolving these claims through negotiations. Claims are accepted for negotiation under this Policy when it is determined that Canada owes an outstanding lawful obligation to a First Nation. If such an obligation is found, a settlement is negotiated that provides First Nations with fair compensation to resolve the claim once and for all.
- As of December 31, 2006, over 480 specific claims have been concluded across the country, including 277 negotiated settlements. These settlements involve about 181 First Nation communities with over 230,000 members. About 120 specific claims are under negotiation.
- Under Canada's Specific Claims Policy, the interests of third parties must be taken into account during the negotiation process. Canada does not take away privately owned lands to settle any claims, nor are private property owners asked to sell their land unwillingly. If land changes hands as a result of a land claim, it will only happen on a willing-seller/willing-buyer basis. When First Nations ask Canada to give purchased land reserve status, criteria from Canada's policy on reserve land must be met. For example, this

policy ensures that access to private property won't be hindered. The policy says that consultation must take place with any neighbouring municipality and the province to address any issues of mutual concern.

- Canada is committed to honouring its outstanding lawful obligations to First Nations and to resolving outstanding claims to the benefit of all Canadians.

March 2007

Back to News Release

Back to News Release Index

Revised: 2007-03-26
Created: 2007-03-23

Top of Page

Important Notices